



RFCI

February 2023

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the
RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL,
INC.

<http://www.rarefruit.org>

Tampa.Bay.RFCI@gmail.com

<http://www.facebook.com/TampaBayChapterRareFruitCouncilIntlInc>

Meetings are held the second Sunday, 2:00 P.M.

at the American Legion Post 111,

6918 N. Florida Ave, Tampa 33604

∞ Upcoming Programs and Events ∞

February 9-20, 2023 - The Florida State Fair.



The Clubs' display 2022, photo George Campani

The Clubs' display will be present during the entire length of the Fair, and the Citrus Celebration will be held on the 3rd Sunday of the Fair, which is the 19th of February.

Note: there is no regular meeting in February.

Hope to see you at the Fair!!

March 12, Tomatoes in Florida. Dr. Gary Vallad, a vegetable pathologist at UF/IFAS Gulf Coast Research and Education Center, will speak on growing tomatoes. (Rescheduled from August).



∞ Welcome New Members ∞

Joel Penn

Land o Lakes

Katholeen Kampfe

Riverview

President: Hillary Cosenza; Vice President: Dylan Chadwell; Secretary: Jager Mitchell;
Treasurer: Susan McAveety; Newsletter/Membership: Denise Provencher

Passiflora in Florida

Mark Bailey



Photo – George Campani

January's meeting started the year off with an enlightening talk on Passiflora by Mark Bailey, a faculty member at the University of Florida. The discussion focused on *P. edulis*, including the different cultivars, and how to grow them to maximize production. There are about 550 species in the Passiflora genus, but only a small number produce edible fruit. The name is symbolic of Christ's crucifixion, passion flower "flor das cinco chagas" meaning flower of the five wounds of Christ.

Passiflora species found in Florida

- P. biflora* (two lobe passion flower) – not native – found in S. Florida
- P. ciliate* (fringed passion flower) – not native – found in Central and South Florida
- P. edulis* (passion fruit)
- P. incarnata* (maypop) – native - found in southern states
- P. lutea* (yellow passion flower) – native – north Florida
- P. miniate* (scarlet passion flower) – not native
- P. multiflora* (white flower) – native – endangered – S. Florida
- P. pallens* (pineland) – native - endangered - S. Florida
- P. sexiflora* (goatsfoot) - native - endangered - S. Florida
- P. suberosa* (corkystem) – most of Florida
- P. vitifolia* (perfumed passion flower) – not native



Passion fruit cross section, showing juice-filled arils and black seeds.
Credit: Mark Bailey, UF/IFAS

Edible Passiflora



Eastern Carpenter Bee on passionflower - Credit: Mark Bailey, UF/IFAS

- P. glata* – sweet yellow to orange when ripe
- P. grandadilla* – orange colored when ripe
- P. laurifolia* – water lemon – yellow or orange when ripe – coconut flavor
- P. maliformis* - sweet calabash – round yellow/brown fruit
- P. quadrangularis* – giant granadilla – huge up to 8 inch green/yellow fruit
- P. flavicarpa* – yellow fruit

Passiflora facts:

Passion fruit is a short-lived evergreen perennial vine that produces an aromatic, tropical tasting fruit.

Purple and yellow varieties are the most cultivated in the United States.

The fruit ripens into a pithy pepo (botanically a berry) with flash covered seeds. Each seed is surrounded by a membranous sac filled with pulpy juice.



"Passiflora edulis f. edulis Sims" by Johnocampo - Own work.
Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike

Cultivation:

Plant after danger of frost in slightly acid soil (5.5 – 6.5 PH).

Good drainage is important.

Can grow in containers – a great way to avoid nematodes, and have control over other variables.

Young vines should be fertilized to encourage maximum growth of roots and vines. Begin fertilizer in late winter after pruning, and continue at regular intervals into early fall.

Avoid excess nitrogen as it encourages leaf growth, not flowering.

Compost is a great additive and topping.

Trellising will help management of vine growth and make harvesting easier. Use vertical trellising as is done with grapes, or horizontal trellising such as a clothesline or pergola.

Orientating trellis lines north to south maximizes sun exposure.

Vines live 3-5 years. Replace when plant has lost its vigor.

There are minimal insect and disease problems. Native butterflies will consume the leaves, usually not a problem for the plant.

Keep airflow around leaves. Don't allow leaf thatch to accumulate.

Cold can kill mature plants completely, cover the base to ensure survival.



Diagram of passionflower anatomy
Credit: Mark Bailey, UF/IFAS

✧ What's Happening ✧

by Paul Zmoda

This winter's cold temperatures haven't been so bad so far. Three moderate-to-light frosts, all above 34 degrees, didn't hurt much. I had covered the producing tomatoes just in case.

Dormant pruning of grapes is still ongoing – then it will be on to plums, persimmons, and whatever else needs a seasonal “haircut”. Evergreen trees, such as starfruit and avocados get trimmed any old time if I happen to be passing by and see something out of place.

Tampa's chief arborist, Steven Eyster, came over to make a video of me pruning grapes and plums. He wants to use it when arborists need continuing education to maintain their license. I felt honored.

Only one persimmon cultivar is still holding fruit. It is 'Winterset', and when soft-ripe may turn out to be my favorite Asian persimmon.

New plantings: Guthrie plum, and a persimmon rootstock.



Winterset persimmon – photo Paul Zmoda



Past Club President Jimmy Lee, and Sally Lee (front row), Roshan Premraj (L), George Campani, Jerry Amyot (back row).

2023 *Citrus Celebration* at Florida State Fair in *Special Events Center building*

(Located beside the Florida Living Center building- on the west side. *Use Gate # 3*)



After the Freeze

In caring for your fruiting plants after a freeze, remember not to prune much at this point. Wait until the weather warms to fully assess freeze damage. It takes time, sometimes as long as a few



Bananas after a freeze photo: Denise Provencher

months to determine the extent of the damage, so you do not want to prune yet.

The damaged portions of the plant can still provide some protection to the plant if left in place, such as with bananas (*picture left*). Although not the prettiest, the hanging browned leaves will help insulate the trunk, new pups, and crown against another freeze. Once things warm up, these bananas will look as good as new. Some plants will look bad, but will put out new leaves when things warm up.

Pruning too early can lead to the plant putting out new growth that will be damaged if another freeze occurs.

When warm weather returns, you will better be able to assess how much pruning is needed.

Annual plants, flowers and vegetables, as well as perennials that die back to the ground naturally, can now be cleaned out and cut back at this point in the season.

For more information, check these IFAS articles on before, during, and after freeze care for your plants.

<https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/care/weather/treating-cold-damage.html>

<https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/lawn-and-garden/winter-plant-protection/>

<https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/lakeco/2022/12/20/caring-for-landscape-plants-after-a-freeze/>

<https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/pinellasco/2018/02/07/freeze-damaged-landscape/>

Garden Jewels



Keep those hummingbird feeders filled with fresh nectar! After the freeze killed back so many flowers, these vibrant little flying machines appreciate the help we can provide them during the winter months.

Did you know:

The hummingbirds you see at your feeder in the winter are often “snowbirds” that have flown down from Canada and the northern United States to winter in Florida. The hummingbirds that are here in the summer often fly the 500 miles across the Gulf to winter in Central America.

Hummingbirds consume more than nectar. They also eat fruit flies, gnats, aphids and other bugs that bother your fruit trees.

The ruby-throated hummer is the species most often seen in the eastern US.

The average life-span of a hummingbird is about 5 years, but they can live to double that.

Hummingbirds are the smallest migrating bird.

They are the only bird that can fly backwards, and they weigh less than a nickel.

∞ Club Notes ∞

Contributing to the newsletter is a great way to share what you are doing in your garden with other members, learn what other members are growing, and get your questions answered.

Your submissions for the newsletter, pictures, notes of interest, events, tips, recipes, questions, etc. are especially needed - please send them to bdprovencher@tampabay.rr.com

Submissions for the next newsletter due by: **February 22nd**.

∞ Membership information ∞

NEW MEMBERS

Download and fill out a membership application from: <https://rarefruit.org/membership/>, and send with check or money order for \$20 made out to Tampa Bay RFCI to:
Tampa Bay RFCI, 12722 Prosser Rd., Dade City, FL 33525

RENEWING MEMBERS

Send check or money order for \$20 made out to Tampa Bay RFCI and mail to:
Tampa Bay RFCI, 12722 Prosser Rd., Dade City, FL 33525



The objectives of The Tampa Bay Rare Fruit Council International:

To inform the public about the merits and uses of fruits common to this region and encourages the cultivation, collection, propagation and growth of fruits that are exotic or unusual to west central Florida. The club also encourages the development of new fruit varieties, cooperating with local and foreign agricultural agencies.

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